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SPEECHES
OF
MR. WEBSTER
AT
CAPON SPRINGS, VIRGINIA;
TOGETHER WITH THOSE OF
SIR H. L. BULWER & WM. L. CLARKE, ESQ.,
JUNE 28, 1851.

GIDEON & Co., Printers.

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PRELIMINARY NOTE.

On Saturday, the 28th of June last, while upon a brief visit with his family to the Capon Springs, in Virginia, the Hon. DANIEL WEBSTER was entertained at a public dinner, given to him by two or three hundred of the yeomanry of that region of country, without respect to party. It was in every particular a splendid affair, and there were persons present who had travelled fifty miles (one old revolutionary soldier having *walked* in the burning sun some fifteen miles) for the purpose of paying their respects to the "Defender of the Constitution." The speeches which Mr. WEBSTER delivered on the occasion were received with the greatest demonstrations of pleasure. The enthusiasm which they excited was immense; and distinguished members of the Democratic party complimented the speaker, in a public manner, for his boldness in giving expression to his liberal and enlarged views.

Sir HENRY L. BULWER, the Hon. LEWIS C. LEVIN, and Hon. JOHN BARNEY, happening to be present, were toasted, and also delivered brief speeches, which were warmly received and highly complimented.

The first speech of Mr. WEBSTER and the speech of Mr. BULWER were the only ones which were reported; a few notes only were taken of Mr. WEBSTER's second speech, and his official duties have been such as made it impossible for him to write it out, or to do more than make a few verbal alterations so as to render his meaning more clear where it had been misapprehended.

Although these speeches have already been printed in the newspapers, the interest which they have excited in the public mind has induced their re-publication in pamphlet form.

IN EXCHANGE

Bos. Athen
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MR. WEBSTER'S SPEECHES.

The gentleman who presided at the Dinner was WM. L. CLARKE, esq., of Winchester, and, in introducing the distinguished Guest of the company, he remarked as follows:

I am about to announce the next general toast. The sentiments expressed in it are in nowise distinguished for novelty. They are known here in the secluded recesses of North Mountain, as they are known at the National Metropolis, or at the Court of St. James or Vienna. They do not belong to, nor can they be appropriated by any locality, by any State, or confederation of States; but wherever man is free, wherever he is the subject of constitutional freedom, or is struggling for that boon, there, in whatever clime or latitude he may be, he claims to participate in this general fund. Announced now on this occasion, as they have been announced heretofore over and over again, they will be re-announced again and again, by the present age and all future ages, so long as liberty and union are one and inseparable. [Applause.] Our distinguished guest, who is the subject of these sentiments, has been so kind as to say that here, in the bosom of VIRGINIA, he is at home. I think he said he felt himself at home. Sir, we intend you shall be at home. [Applause.] We have given you not only our admiration, that the world gives you, but we have given you our affections. Long ago you enchained our understandings; now you have thrown a spell over our hearts. You imperilled all for us; and Virginia is not the dwelling place of ingratitude. [Great applause.] You have asserted the vital rights of the South; a tottering power of the General Government leaned against you for support, and you upheld it. You claimed its execution, not merely by a silent vote, or a formal speech in the Senate, but you have travelled into your adopted State, which was bone of your bone, and which, for a quarter of a century, has given you all she had to give, and is ready to do it again; and there, with the shadows of that great revolutionary monument over you, and in the language of your great prototype, you have declared, "Ye men of Athens, ye worship an unknown God." And you have but returned from the great State of New York, and there, in the central parts, where these hydra principles first received serious political organization, even there rung, with a moral sublimity all your own, into the ears of every civil officer in that vast dominion, the fearful challenge to look to and re-

spect the oath he hath taken to support the Constitution of the United States. Sir, you come among us suddenly, and I can add unexpectedly. We have neither pomp nor circumstance to give you, but we have a deep and abiding sense of the inestimable service you have rendered our beloved country, and we have sought, and do now most earnestly seek, to impress your mind with that conviction. I give you, gentlemen,

“ DANIEL WEBSTER, OUR DISTINGUISHED GUEST: THE JURIST AND STATESMAN WHO HAS ILLUSTRATED THE GLORY OF OUR COUNTRY. THE CHAMPION OF THE CONSTITUTION AND THE UNION, WHO HAS SOWN THE SEED OF CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTY BROADCAST OVER THE CIVILIZED WORLD.”

Mr. WEBSTER rose to reply amid deafening applause. He said:

Ladies and Gentlemen: Fellow-citizens of Virginia: It is my first duty to express, however inadequately, my gratitude to you, one and all, for this unexpected token of respect. I am aware that many of you have come from great distances; many of you, I know, have come upon the saddle, under a burning sun; and you have done this to tender me this token of your regard. I know also that many of you have left your estates and harvest fields, at a time when every hour, whether of proprietor or workman, is so important. For this, gentlemen, I thank you. I am afraid this courtesy has been to you costly and inconvenient, and therefore, gentlemen, it sinks more deeply in my heart. I thank you, gentlemen.

It has been my fortune, gentlemen, to have seen much of Eastern Virginia and of Southern Virginia; in past times, also, gentlemen, I have seen something of Western Virginia, those counties bordering on the Ohio river; but not until this week has it been my fortune to have seen any thing of the beautiful and renowned valley where I now stand. I esteem it a great pleasure to have had a few days' leisure, or at least a few days that I could spare from my official duties, to follow the course of the Potomac, penetrate the Blue Ridge, and, turning to the left along the valley of the Shenandoah, see something of the country between the Blue Ridge and the Alleghany. My journey through your country thus far has been one of great gratification and admiration. I am free to confess that, from the time I crossed the Potomac, and, leaving it, went with the train upwards along the valley of the Shenandoah, I have seen a country abounding in fertility and remarkable for its vast riches and beauty. [Applause.] I have seen the great grain-growing counties of New York, and of Ohio, and other Western States; of England, from Herefordshire to the borders of Scotland; but I have never seen any wheat-growing region surpassing that which I crossed between Harper's Ferry and Winchester. I have been told that the same rich country extends beyond, and is to be found through Shenandoah, Rockingham, and Augusta counties. I hope, gentlemen, soon to have an opportunity of witnessing the truth of that statement. [Applause.]

I admire, too, your mountain scenery ; I admire it for its sublimity and grandeur ; though, perhaps, these mountains are not adapted to that high degree of cultivation for which the valley is so remarkable, still they are picturesque, and give rise to thoughts and feelings which tend to elevate and dignify the man who beholds them. I assure you, gentlemen, I should feel most happy, if my time would permit, and I hope before long I may have the opportunity, to proceed still further in this region of the State, to go westward to the banks of the South Branch of the Potomac, and see that great corn-growing and cattle-raising country of which I have heard, and of which I have read, so much for nearly half my life. [Applause.] But this, at present, my time will not allow. This is my first visit to this part of Virginia, but I hope, gentlemen, it will not be the last. [Applause.]

There are two elements which constitute a country ; soil and climate are one, men and women the other. [Laughter.] Here they are both to be found. But, even if there were no men and women in this region, the country would still be valuable and beautiful ; and if it were as barren as yonder rock, (pointing through the window to a jutting cliff which overhangs the spring,) but was filled with intelligent men and refined and educated women, like those who now throng this wide hall, it would be most admirable still. So, if either were here, your country would be beautiful and fascinating, and you, gentlemen, know how enchanting it must be and is, when both are so happily combined. [Great applause.]

But I must now turn my attention to the toast which has been read by my friend, a friend of long standing, at the head of the table. I must attribute its terms to the partiality of friendship, and I am sure that they are somewhat extravagant. I disclaim having done any thing in support and defence, and in the maintenance of the Constitution, except what I have done in co-operation with other abler men ; with men of high character and true devotion to their country and its political institutions. [Applause.] I was bred, gentlemen, indeed, I might almost say I was born, in admiration of our political institutions. I have studied them long, and in fact have studied little else of a political nature. All the public acts of my life have been performed in the service of the General Government. I have never held any office under any State government ; and, with the exception of a few days only, I have never been a member of a State legislature. I am, as you may know, a lawyer, and from necessity a laborious one. I know not how the bread of idleness tastes, for I have never had a bit of it in my mouth. [Great applause.] This, perhaps, savors of self-commendation, but I hope it may be pardoned. If, in the discharge of my public duties, and in the performance of my public services, my private interests have suffered and been neglected, I am amply compensated by the hope

that if I leave no broad estate, no rich accumulations, I shall leave at least an inheritance not entirely disreputable to those who shall come after me. [This sentence was uttered under great emotion, and received the most enthusiastic applause.]

I profess, gentlemen, to have acted throughout my life upon those principles which governed your ancestors, and my own New England ancestors, in the times that tried men's souls; that is to say, in the revolutionary struggle, and in that other most important period which witnessed the establishment of a General Government. All know that in this last high and important proceeding, Virginia took an eminent lead. She saw that, to the disgrace of the country, the debt of the Revolution remained unpaid; and that gallant officers and brave soldiers, who had brought wounds and scars and broken limbs from the battle-fields of liberty, were reduced to poverty and want, and that some of them were almost literally begging their bread. The great and good men of other States felt the same evil, and their hearts were rung by a similar anguish.

An English poet has said, that there was a time when for an Englishman it was fame enough

"That CHATHAM's language was his native tongue,
"And WOLFE's great name compatriot with his own."

Now, gentlemen, it is fame enough for me, if it may be thought that in my political conduct I have maintained, defended, and acted upon the principles of Virginia and Massachusetts, as these principles were proclaimed and sustained in the two great epochs in the history of our country, the Revolution, and the adoption of the present constitutional Government. If I have worked steadily to this end, I am sure that, whether much has been done or little has been done, it has been directed towards a good purpose. [Loud applause.] All that I say to-day, and all that I may say on similar occasions, I wish to be in the spirit of Washington and Madison, Wythe and Pendleton, and the proscribed patriots of Massachusetts, Hancock and Samuel Adams. [Applause.] If these and other great founders of our liberty and fathers of our Constitution erred, then have I erred; then have I been the most incorrigible of political sinners. [Laughter.] But if they were right, then I venture to hope that I am right also; and "neither principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come," shall eradicate that hope from my breast. [Loud and enthusiastic cheering.]

The leading sentiment in the toast from the Chair is the Union of the States. THE UNION OF THE STATES! What mind can comprehend the consequences of that Union, past, present, and to come? The Union of these States is the all-absorbing topic of the day; on it all men write,

speak, think, and dilate, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. [Applause.] And yet, gentlemen, I fear its importance has been but insufficiently appreciated. Like all common blessings, however great, it has been of late years too little the subject of reflection. The unthinking and careless hardly take heed of that atmosphere, which supports their lives from day to day and from hour to hour. As the sun rises in the morning, follows its track through the heavens, and goes down at night, we notice its course, enjoy its light and heat, and when we see it sink beneath the western horizon, we have no doubt, we do not think of the possibility, that it may not appear for another day. We are in no fear of perpetual darkness, or the return of chaos. So it is with our political system under a United Government and National Constitution. To these most of us were born; we have lived under their daily blessings, as if those blessings were not only matters of course, but imperishable also. But, alas, gentlemen, human structures, however strong, do not stand upon the everlasting laws of nature. They may crumble, they may fall; and republican institutions of government will assuredly sooner or later crumble and fall, if there shall not continue to be among the people an intelligent regard for such institutions, a great appreciation of their benefits, and a spirited purpose to uphold and maintain them. And when they shall crumble and fall, the political catastrophe will resemble that which would happen in the natural world were the sun to be struck out of heaven. If this Union were to be broken up by nullification, separation, secession, or any event whatsoever of equally repulsive name and character, chaos would come again, and where all is now light, and joy, and gladness, there would be spread over us a darkness like that of Erebus. Yes, gentlemen, I have little patience with those who talk flippantly of secession and disunion; they do not appear to me to understand of what they speak, nor to have the least idea of its consequences. If they have any meaning, I do not comprehend that meaning. Suppose this Union were dissolved to-day, where should we be to-morrow? I think a state of things would arise in which I should feel disposed to take shelter in the caverns of the mountains, or seek some other place of obscurity, in which I should not witness the degradation and ruin of the country. Every anticipation of such an event presents a gloomy and horrible picture; it is a vast Serbonian bog, in which no man could be happy unless he thought he was about getting out. Those who love the Union ardently, and who mean to defend it gallantly, are happy, cheerful, with bright and buoyant hopes for the future, and full of manly firmness and resolution. But secession and disunion are a region of gloom, and morass, and swamp; no cheerful breezes fan it, no spirit of health visits it; it is all malaria. It is all fever

and ague. [Laughter and great applause.] Nothing beautiful or useful grows in it; the traveller through it breathes miasma, and treads among all things unwholesome and loathsome. It is like the region of your great Dismal Swamp; it is all

“Tangled juniper, beds of weeds,
With many a fen where the serpent feeds,
And man never trod before.” [Laughter.]

For one, I have no desire to breathe such an air, or to have such footing for my walks. [Applause.]

Gentlemen, I am aware that the respect paid to me to-day is in consequence of my support of the adjustment measures of the last Congress. Although I wished to raise no false alarm, nor create any fears, yet, I believed in my conscience, that a crisis was at hand; a dangerous, a fearful crisis; and I resolved to meet it at any hazard, and with whatever strength I possessed. A true patriot, like a faithful mariner, must be prepared for all exigencies; in the words of the old song—

—————“He is born for all weathers;
Let the winds blow high or blow low,
His duty keeps him to his tethers,
And where the gale drives he must go.” [Applause.]

The support of the Union is a great practical subject, involving the prosperity and glory of the whole country, and affecting the prosperity of every individual in it. We ought to take a large and comprehensive view of it; to look to its vast results, and to the consequences which would flow from its overthrow. It is not a mere topic for ingenious disquisition, or theoretical or fanatical criticism. Those who assail the Union at the present day seem to be persons of one idea only, and many of them of but half an idea. [Applause.] They plant their batteries on some useless abstraction, some false dogma, or some gratuitous assumption. Or, perhaps, it may be more proper to say, that they look at it with microscopic eyes, seeking for some spot, or speck, or blot, or blur, and if they find any thing of this kind, they are at once for overturning the whole fabric. And, when nothing else will answer, they invoke religion and speak of a higher law. Gentlemen, this North Mountain is high, the Blue Ridge higher still; the Alleghany higher than either; and yet this higher law ranges farther than an eagle's flight above the highest peaks of the Alleghany. [Laughter.] No common vision can discern it; no conscience, not transcendental and ecstatic, can feel it; the hearing of common men never listens to its high behests; and therefore one should think it is not a safe law to be acted on, in matters of the highest practical moment. It is the code, however, of the fanatical and factious abolitionists of the North.

The secessionists of the South take a different course of remark. They are learned and eloquent; they are animated and full of spirit; they are highminded and chivalrous; they state their supposed injuries and causes of complaint in elegant phrases and exalted tones of speech. But these complaints are all vague and general. I confess to you, gentlemen, that I know no hydrostatic pressure strong enough to bring them into any solid form, in which they could be seen or felt. [Laughter and applause.] They think otherwise, doubtless. But, for one, I can discern nothing real or well-grounded in their complaints. If I may be allowed to be a little professional, I would say that all their complaints and alleged grievances are like a very insufficient plea in the law; they are bad on general demurrer for want of substance. [Loud laughter.] But I am not disposed to reproach these gentlemen, or to speak of them with disrespect. I prefer to leave them to their own reflections. I make no arguments against resolutions, conventions, secession speeches, or proclamations. Let these things go on. The whole matter, it is to be hoped, will blow over, and men will return to a sounder mode of thinking. But one thing, gentlemen, be assured of, the first step taken in the programme of secession, which shall be an actual infringement of the Constitution or the Laws, will be promptly met. [Great applause.] And I would not remain an hour in any Administration that should not immediately meet any such violation of the Constitution and the Law effectually, and at once. Prolonged applause.] And I can assure you, gentlemen, that all with whom I am at present associated in the Government entertain the same decided purpose. [Renewed applause, with cheers.]

And now, gentlemen, let me advert to a cheering and gratifying occurrence. Let me do honor to your great and ancient Commonwealth of Virginia. Let me say that in my opinion the resolutions passed by her Legislature at the last session, in which some gentlemen now present bore a part, have effectually suppressed, or greatly tended to suppress, the notion of separate governments and new confederacies. [Great applause.] All hopes of disunion, founded upon the probable course of Virginia, are dissipated into thin air. [Cheers.] An eminent gentleman in the Nashville Convention ejaculated, "O, that Virginia were with us! If Virginia would but take the lead in going out of the Union, other Southern States would cheerfully follow that lead." Ah, but that "if" was a great obstacle! [Laughter.] It was pregnant with important meaning. "If Virginia would take the lead." But who, that looked for any consistency in Virginia, expected to see her leading States out of the Union, since she took such great pains, under the counsels of her ablest and wisest men, to lead them into it? [Applause.] Her late resolutions have put a

decided negative upon that "if," and the country cordially thanks her for it.

Fellow-citizens, I must bring these remarks to a close. Other gentlemen are present to whom you expect to have the pleasure of listening. [Cries of Go on! Go on!] My concluding sentiment is,

"THE UNION OF THE STATES: MAY THOSE ANCIENT FRIENDS, VIRGINIA AND MASSACHUSETTS, CONTINUE TO UPHOLD IT SO LONG AS THE WAVES OF THE ATLANTIC SHALL BEAT ON THE SHORES OF THE ONE, OR THE ALLEGHANIES REMAIN FIRM ON THEIR BASES IN THE TERRITORIES OF THE OTHER!"

This sentiment was received with enthusiastic demonstrations of applause. The room resounded with the plaudits of the immense crowd, and the cheers followed each other in such quick succession that it appeared as if they would lift the very roof; and it was noticed that one venerable man went up and actually put his arms around Mr. WEBSTER, while seated in his chair, and exclaimed "God bless you, for you are the greatest and best man in the world!"

It is proper to remark that Mr. WEBSTER was called upon to deliver a *second* speech on the evening of the above-mentioned dinner, which, though brief, contained some important features. It was called forth by the remarks of a Democratic gentleman, who had publicly expressed his sanction of Mr. WEBSTER's previous speech, though he acknowledged that he had long held widely different opinions from that gentleman on nearly every question of public policy.

Mr. WEBSTER said:

Whatever may have been the differences of opinion which have heretofore existed between the Democratic and Whig parties on other subjects, they are now forgotten, or at least have become subordinate; and the important question that is now asked is, Are you a Union man? [Great applause.] The question at this time is, the Union, and how we shall preserve its blessings for the present, and for all time to come. To maintain that Union, we must observe, in good faith, the Constitution and all its parts. If that Constitution be not observed in all its parts, but its provisions be deliberately and permanently set aside in some parts, the whole of it ceases to be binding; but the case must be clear, flagrant, undeniable, and in a point of vital interest. In short, it must be such as would justify revolution; for after all, secession, disruption of the Union, or successful nullification are but other names for revolution. Where the whole system of laws and Government is overthrown, under whatever name the thing is done, what is it but Revolution? For it would be absurd to suppose, that by whole States and large portions of the country, either the North or the South has the power or the right to violate any part of that Constitution, directly, and of purpose, and still claim from the other observance of its provisions. [Applause.] If the South were to vio-

late any part of the Constitution intentionally and systematically, and persist in so doing year after year, and no remedy could be had, would the North be any longer bound by the rest of it? And if the North were deliberately, habitually, and of fixed purpose, to disregard one part of it, would the South be bound any longer to observe its other obligations? This is indeed to be understood with some qualification, for I do not mean, of course, that every violation by a State, of an article of the Constitution, would discharge other States from observing its provisions. No State can decide for itself what is constitutional and what is not. When any part of the Constitution is supposed to be violated by a State law, the true mode of proceeding is to bring the case before the judicial tribunals; and if the unconstitutionality of the State law be made out, it is to be set aside. This has been done in repeated cases, and is the ordinary remedy. But what I mean to say is, that if the public men of a large portion of the country, and especially their representatives in Congress, labor to prevent, and do permanently prevent, the passage of laws necessary to carry into effect a provision of the Constitution, particularly intended for the benefit of another part of the country, and which is of the highest importance to it, it cannot be expected that that part of the country will long continue to observe other constitutional provisions made in favor of the rest of the country; because, gentlemen, a disregard of constitutional duty, in such a case, cannot be brought within the corrective authority of the judicial power. If large portions of public bodies, against their duty and their oaths, will persist in refusing to execute the Constitution, and do in fact prevent such execution, no remedy seems to lie by any application to the Supreme Court. The case now before the country clearly exemplifies my meaning. Suppose the North to have decided majorities in Congress, and suppose these majorities persist in refusing to pass laws for carrying into effect the clause of the Constitution, which declares that fugitive slaves shall be restored, it would be evident that no judicial process could compel them to do their duty, and what remedy would the South have?

How absurd it is to suppose that when different parties enter into a compact for certain purposes, either can disregard any one provision, and expect nevertheless the other to observe the rest! I intend for one to regard, and maintain, and carry out, to the fullest extent, the Constitution of the United States, which I have sworn to support in all its parts and all its provisions. [Loud cheers.] It is written in the Constitution:

“NO PERSON HELD TO SERVICE OR LABOR IN ONE STATE, UNDER THE LAWS THEREOF, ESCAPING INTO ANOTHER, SHALL, IN CONSEQUENCE OF ANY LAW OR REGULATION THEREIN, BE DISCHARGED FROM SUCH SERVICE OR

LABOR, BUT SHALL BE DELIVERED UP ON CLAIM OF THE PARTY TO WHOM SUCH SERVICE OR LABOR MAY BE DUE.”

That is as much a part of the Constitution as any other, and as equally binding and obligatory as any other on all men, public or private. [Applause.] And who denies this? None but the abolitionists of the North. And pray what is it they will not deny? [Great applause and laughter.] They have but the one idea; and it would seem that these fanatics at the North and the secessionists at the South are putting their heads together to derive means to defeat the good designs of honest and patriotic men. They act to the same end and the same object, and the Constitution has to take the fire from both sides.

I have not hesitated to say, and I repeat, that if the Northern States refuse, wilfully and deliberately, to carry into effect that part of the Constitution which respects the restoration of fugitive slaves, and Congress provide no remedy, the South would no longer be bound to observe the compact. [Immense applause.] A bargain cannot be broken on one side and still bind the other side. I say to you, gentlemen, in Virginia, as I said on the shores of Lake Erie and in the city of Boston, as I may say again, in that city or elsewhere in the North, that you of the South have as much right to receive your fugitive slaves, as the North has to any of its rights and privileges of navigation and commerce. I desire to be understood here among you, and throughout the country, that in hopes, thoughts, and feelings, I profess to be an American; altogether and nothing but an American. (Long and continued cheering.) And that I am for the Constitution, and the whole Constitution. I am as ready to fight and to fall for the constitutional rights of Virginia, as I am for those of Massachusetts. I pour out to you, gentlemen, my whole heart, and I assure you these are my sentiments. (Cheers.) I would no more see a feather plucked unjustly from the honor of Virginia, than I would see one so plucked from the honor of Massachusetts. (Great applause.) It has been said that I have, by the course I have thought proper to pursue, displeased a portion of the people of Massachusetts. That is true, and if I had dissatisfied more of them, what of that? (Great and continued applause.) I was in the Senate of the United States, and had sworn to support the Constitution of the United States. That Constitution made me a Senator of the United States, acting for all the States, and my vote was to bind the whole country. I was a Senator for the whole country. (Applause.) What exclusive regard had I to pay to the wishes of Massachusetts upon a question affecting the whole nation, and in which my vote was to bind Virginia as well as Massachusetts? My vote was to affect the interests of the whole country, and was to be

given on matters of a high Constitutional character. I assure you, gentlemen, I no more respected the instructions of Massachusetts, than I would have respected those of Virginia. It would be just as reasonable to expect me to vote as the particular interests of Massachusetts required, as it would be to expect that, as an arbitrator, a referee, or an umpire between two individuals, I was bound to obey the instructions of one of them. (Applause.) Could I do that? Have I descended, or am I expected to descend, to that level? (Cries of "never," "never." "You are not the man to do it.") I hope not.

Gentlemen, instructions from States may properly be regarded as expressions of opinion by well informed political men, and in that view are entitled to respect. But that a Senator in Congress, acting under the Constitution, and bound by his duty and his oath, to act, in all things, according to his conscience, for the good of all the States, should, nevertheless be absolutely bound by the will of one of them, is preposterous. Virginia has not consented that her rights, under the Constitution, shall be judged of by the legislature of Massachusetts; nor has Massachusetts agreed that hers shall be judged of by the legislature of Virginia. But both have agreed, that their rights and interests shall be judged of by persons, some of whom are appointed by each, and all bound to decide impartially. That men, mutually chosen to decide the rights of parties under a compact, are yet to be bound, each to the will of the party appointing him, is an absurdity, exceeding all other absurdities.

Mr. WEBSTER also adverted, at considerable length, to the consequences of a dissolution of the Union, and pointed out the present and prospective power and glory of the United States. He spoke of the struggle now going on in Europe between constitutional government and arbitrary power; and incidentally mentioned his having alluded to this subject in a letter addressed by him, some time since, to the Austrian Chargé d'-Affaires. (Tremendous cheering.) He next proceeded, at some length, to trace the system of republican governments; the practical operation of popular representation; and the inevitable necessity that the will of the majority, constitutionally exercised, should be the supreme law; and that the law, thus ordained, being the States' collected will, should be obeyed. In conclusion, he said: These, gentlemen, are my sentiments. I intend to hold fast to them for the remainder of my life, in the hope that, when I die, I may close my eyes on free, happy, united America!

MR. BULWER'S SPEECH.

The Chair having given the following regular toast:

"OUR DISTINGUISHED GUEST, THE LEARNED AND ACCOMPLISHED MINISTER FROM THE COURT OF ST. JAMES, WHO UPHOLDS THE DIGNITY OF HIS EMINENT STATION, GUARDS THE INTEREST OF HIS OWN PEOPLE, AND WINS THE GOOD WILL OF OURS."

Sir HENRY L. BULWER rose and delivered the following speech, which was highly and continuously applauded:

Mr. President and Gentlemen: Allow me to say that the honor you have conferred upon me, and indeed that the whole of this scene, takes me completely by surprise. When a man undertakes a jaunt or a journey, he, in some degree, generally anticipates the business or the amusement he expects to meet with; but I can assure you that when I came into the mountains of Virginia, though I might have had some faint idea of angling for a trout or hunting after a rattlesnake, I had not the remotest conception of the probability or possibility of being present at a public dinner, or of making a speech. [Laughter and applause.] I am sure, therefore, that you will not expect from me so learned a disquisition as that of my honorable friend from Baltimore (Mr. BARNEY) upon the institutions and celebrities of the State of Virginia; nor that I should describe to you the origin and progress of government and society from those early times "when Adam delved and Eve span," down to the moment when we are here assembled at the "Mountain House," with the logical severity and eloquent and poetical fancy of my honorable friend from Pennsylvania, (Mr. LEVIN.) [Applause and laughter.] But this I can truly and simply say, that with your kind and generous expressions still present to my memory, and with the honest and hearty-looking countenances of those from whom these expressions proceeded before my eyes, and with the knowledge that you, the gentlemen and yeomen of Virginia, have here at a moment's notice assembled to do honor to my illustrious friend, whose voice is as eloquent as that of nature herself in these romantic solitudes, the pleasure I experience is, following the ordinary rule, the more lively from being altogether unexpected. [Much applause.] With your political parties and discussions, gentlemen, I have nothing to do; to them I am, and I wish to be, an entire stranger; but, independently of all such parties and discussions, I can understand and admire a great political sentiment. The orator of old, when asked what quality was most essential to the exercise of his art, replied "action;" and when asked again what was the next quality, again and again answered, "action;" by which he did not

mean the waving of the hand here, or the lifting of the arm there, but that earnestness which is the expression of true feeling. Gentlemen, the modern Demosthenes, who is this day amongst you, when asked again and again what is most essential at this moment to the welfare of his country, has said, with that earnestness which his predecessor described, again and again, "Union." [Great applause.] Gentlemen, I am the citizen of an extensive empire, the subject of a sovereign whose dominions stretch out far and wide over the surface of the globe, and I can well comprehend and sympathize with the statesman who, proud of the authority and majesty of this vast Republic, shrinks with horror from the thought of its being split up into petty commonwealths, comparatively insignificant in power and small in extent.

I do not, however, agree with some preceding speakers, that it is altogether unnatural or uncommon to find in great States men who speak with indifference of the possibility of those great States becoming small ones. [Sensation.] There are such men in my own country, and I am not astonished at it. If you want to know the value of health, you must not expect to ascertain it from inquiry of the strong and robust. It is the invalid who will tell it to you ; and thus it is with nations. If you wish to learn the value of national power and national greatness, you must ask the question of the Pole, the Venetian, the Genoese, of the people who, owing to their divisions and their weakness, have lost a national existence ; or you must direct your inquiry to the people of those small States in Europe or America, which still exist, but while they enjoy the name of independence, are alternately under the dictatorship of domestic factions or foreign force. [Applause.] Honor, then, to the man who collects from the aggregate wisdom of a great community a sufficient moral power to assuage local passions and keep within appropriate limits party discontents. [Applause.] But, gentlemen, if it be a great and noble task thus to unite, and keep united, the various elements which constitute the character and greatness of one nation, it is surely a task as noble and as great to unite together, and keep united, two mighty nations, who, by their joint authority as the representatives of that admirable combination of liberty and order, which is every where the sign and symbol of the Anglo-Saxon race, may exercise a beneficent and universal influence over the happiness and destinies of mankind. [Loud and long applause.]

Gentlemen, with this idea now present to my thoughts, I, as an Englishman, say to you as Americans, "union, union, union." [Applause.] Aye, let there not only be peace between us, let there be union also. [Continued applause.] The word resounds through these halls appropriately ; let it reach the ears of Mr. Rickards ! (the proprietor of the Capon Springs

“Mountain House.”) Is he not, gentlemen, himself the type of union? For has he not united all the charms of scenery and of society, of water and of wine, of health and amusement, in this lovely spot? [Applause.] And, as I look around me and see the animated looks and admiring eyes to my left, and the gentle glances and graceful smiles of the fairer portion of my audience to my right, can I be wrong in conjecturing that there is a favorable disposition on all sides of me towards a united state? [Much laughter and applause.] For my own part, gentlemen, whether as regards the union between the different States of this federal Republic; or whether as regards the union between us Englishmen and you Americans; or whether as regards the union between woodland and waterfall, and good cheer and good company; or whether as regards the best and closest of all possible unions, viz., that between warm hearts and willing hands, [much laughter and applause.] I declare myself professedly and emphatically a union man, [renewed laughter and applause,] and as such have enjoyed your festivity, partaken of your sentiments, and now beg to leave amongst you my kindest thanks and most hearty good wishes.

The honorable gentleman sat down amidst loud and prolonged cheering, to which followed three cheers for BULWER.

The following correspondence between the Hon. DANIEL WEBSTER and a gentleman in North Carolina, copied from the National Intelligencer, will be read with interest in connexion with the preceding speeches.

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER :

DEAR SIR : The question of the right of a State to secede from the Union is, as you are doubtless aware, producing at this time, in this part of the Union, no inconsiderable degree of excitement. And, as it is a question in which every free American is directly concerned, a question upon which every free American should be correctly informed, as upon its decision may depend the future prosperity and happiness, or misfortune and ruin of this great country; and, believing as I do, that from your intimate acquaintance with the principles upon which our Government is based, and the operation of all of its machinery, you are entirely competent to give upon this, as upon all other questions of a like character, correct information; and, being anxious myself, as many others are, to possess correct views with regard to this subject, I desire you, valuable as I know your time to be, to devote a moment in giving an answer to the following interrogatory :

“Do you believe that a State has a right to secede from the Union?”

By answering this question, sir, you will confer a favor upon many of your countrymen here, who believe as I do, that an opinion of yours, thus expressed, would go very far towards quieting the excitement that the agitation of this subject has produced in this section of the Union.

With profound admiration for your character as an American statesman, and sincere regard for you as an American citizen,

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

July 20, 1851.

AUGUST 1, 1851.

DEAR SIR: I have received your letter of the 20th July.

The Constitution of the United States recognises no right of secession, as existing in the people of any one State, or any number of States. It is not a limited confederation, but a Government; and it proceeds upon the idea that it is to be perpetual, like other forms of Government, subject only to be dissolved by revolution.

I confess I can form no idea of secession but as the result of a revolutionary movement. How is it possible, for instance, that South Carolina should secede and establish a government foreign to that of the United States, thus dividing Georgia, which does not secede, from the rest of the Union?

Depend upon it, my dear sir, that the secession of any one State would be but the first step in a process, which must inevitably break up the entire Union into more or fewer parts.

What I said at Capon Springs was an argument addressed to the North, and intended to convince the North that if, by its superiority of numbers, it should defeat the operation of a plain, undoubted, and undeniable injunction of the Constitution, intended for the especial protection of the South, such a proceeding must necessarily end in the breaking up of the Government, that is to say, in a revolution.

I am, dear sir, with respect, your obedient servant,

DAN'L WEBSTER.





